
Imprimatur,

Decemb. 24.
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OF THE
Humanity and Charity
OF
CHRISTIANS.

A
SERMON

Preached at the
SUFFOLK FEAST
IN

St. Michael Cornhill, London, Nov. 30. 1686.

By WILLIAM CLAGETT, D.D.
Preacher to the Honourable Society of *Greys-
Inn*, and Chaplain in Ordinary to his *Majesty*.

London, Printed by J. D. for J. Robinson, at the
Golden Lion, and Thomas Newborough at
the Star in *St. Paul's Church-yard*, 1687.

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To my Honoured Friends and Country-men,

Mr. *LANE*, Treasurer,

Dr. *GOODALL*, | Mr. *HILTON*,

Dr. *CLENCHE*, | Mr. *SOUTH*.

Mr. *FOSTER*, | Mr. *STANTON*,

Mr. *GRIMBLE*, | And

Mr. *BIGSBY*, | Mr. *CHAPLIN*,

Stewards for the late *Suffolk* Feast.

Gentlemen,

T*His Sermon was lately preached, and is now printed in compliance with your Desires. But 'tis without the least constraint that I present it thus publickly to you in the first place; who, after so long an Interruption, first called our Country-men together to a Feast of Charity. I could not think of an Argument more proper for the occasion, than that of Good-will to our own Kind, and a more raised Affection to our Brethren of the same Faith. In our*

own

The Epistle Dedicatory, &c.

own Nation we have lately seen the Expressions of a generous Charity to Strangers made conspicuous to the World by the Royal Authority, that gave encouragement to it. So that this Sermon does not speak in behalf of a Vertue that is scarce to be found among us; but was rather intended in praise of them that do well, and to excite others to imitation of such Examples. How common soever this Argument is, yet its own worth will always bear it out. Till Men learn to love one another as Men; and Christians as Christians, all other methods to mend the state of the World, and of the Church, how proper soever they may be, will yet have but little force. For, want of Charity is not so much the Effect, as the Cause of these Differences concerning the Things of this Life, and the way to a better, which are a Grief to all good Men. These, and more Reasons than I can now mention, may plead for the frequency of such earnest Applications as you approved in this Sermon; which, since you will needs have to be thus publick, take it also as a Testimony, that I am,

Gentlemen,

Your affectionate Friend and Servant,

W. CLAGETT.

Of the Humanity and Charity of Christians.

GAL. 6. 10.

As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all Men, especially unto them that are of the Household of Faith.

FROM these words I might well take occasion to discourse upon three distinct subjects.

First ; Of the several *Acts* or *Expressions* of Charity ; which are here all comprehended under *doing good* ; altho by the 6th Verse it should seem, that the Charity of *communicating* in the *good things* of this World, was principally intended in this place.

Secondly ; Of the *Objects* of Charity ; concerning which the Text expressly affirms, that they

they are all *Men* in general, but especially the *Houſhold of Faith*.

And, *Thirdly*; Of the *Rewards* of Charity, which are intimated in the Text by the reference of thoſe words, *As we have therefore opportunity, to the foregoing Promise, verſ. 9. In due ſeaſon we ſhall reap if we faint not.* For this ſhews the *Opportunity* here mentioned to be the time that we have for *ſowing* our good Works, and that if we uſe it, they will yeild a *Harveſt* of Rewards, which we ſhall certainly *reap* in due ſeaſon.

But in ſo narrow a compaſs of time, I muſt not undertake to enlarge upon theſe three Particulars; and therefore omitting the firſt, I chuſe to inſiſt upon the ſecond, and to conclude with ſome few Reflections upon the laſt.

And thus the firſt thing to be conſidered is, the Exhortation to *doing Good*, with reſpect to the general Object: Let us do good unto *all Men*. Now, becauſe it is impoſſible that we ſhould be actually beneficent to every Man in the World, otherwiſe than by our Prayers for All: Therefore the plain meaning of the Exhortation is this, that we ſhould exclude no Man out of our Charity, who needs our help,
and

and comes within the compass of our Ability to do him good. Which tho' it be a Duty so much for the Interest of Mankind, that one would think no body should be against it, yet as the World goes, it seems to need the Charity of us All, in standing up for it against all false Principles, and bad Examples that are advanced in opposition to it.

I must be content at this time to speak for it, without reflecting upon any Opinions or Practices that are against it. And therefore I proceed forthwith to represent this part of the Apostle's Exhortation, *To do good unto all*, as a Duty under Obligations common to *all Men*, and under Obligations peculiar to *Christians*.

I. The Obligations of the first sort, are *Common Humanity*, and *Natural Piety*.

1. *Common Humanity*. For the sense of that Nature which is common to us All, does oblige us to bear kind Affection one to another. Because I know how I my self am affected with Pain and Poverty, with Hunger and Thirst, with Fear and Grief, and with all the Sufferings that Humane Life is subject to; I know how others are affected with them too, inas-

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much

much as we are All moulded into one and the same Nature : So that *Nature* it self has given me a sense of the Miseries of others, which had been a trouble without any advantage, if she had not thereby shewn me the way to ease my self, by relieving them. And that we are framed to these Affections, is one of the Noblest Priviledges we have above *Brutes*, who were made for Selfishness, because they do not understand, and cannot feel what their Fellow *Brutes* suffer. For as for those appearances of Kindness which the Author of Nature hath disposed them to, especially of the old ones to their young, we see they proceed from an Impulse, the meaning of which they understand not, because they go off by certain Rules ; for when the young ones can shift for themselves, there is no appearance of Compassion afterwards in the old, whatsoever occasion there may be for it. To *Man* only of all Creatures under Heaven, God has given this quality, to be affected with the Grief and with the Joy of those of his own kind ; and to feel the Evils which others feel, that we may be universally disposed to help and relieve one another.

Now

Now this, no less than other moral Dispositions, is under the power of our own Liberty to improve it, or weaken it. Tho *Nature* inclines us to Humanity, yet *Custom*, and *bad Principles* may give us another *Bias*, and make us unconcern'd what others feel. But *Nature*, without Art and Force us'd upon it, seldom proves cruel ; and we see that they which have the least of that we call *Breeding*, are prone to Pity and Commiseration. Men of a simple and rustick Education, and of mean Professions, easily fall into Compassion ; and seldom fail of relieving one another, if the consideration of their own Interest does not prevail against it.

But where Human Nature meets with the best Improvements, there Humanity grows into generous Inclinations. The more that Men are exalted above Brutes, the more that they are framed to other Vertues, to Wisdom, Patience, and Fidelity, and Temperance, and Fortitude, and Modesty ; so much the more are they addicted to Mercy and Compassion, and forward to relieve others, tho with loss and pain to themselves. But Inhumanity grows ever-

wretched Mistakes, by brutish Sensuality, or by Pride and Insolence. It grows nowhere but in a Soil that is already cursed. And sometimes there must be a complication of all manner of Vices to make way for this. For some Men who are not otherwise good, are not yet bad enough to put off compassion to their own kind.

Finally, That Applause and Commendation that is universally given to Men of a beneficent and generous Temper, is a standing argument, that to do good to All, is the Law of our Nature. Nay, the Commendation given to *Vertue*, is in great part owing to this, that every *Vertue* is beneficial not only to him that hath it, but to others too. Whatsoever is *lovely*, and of *good Report* amongst Men, as all *Vertue* is, takes the name of Goodness, because it partakes of its nature, and serves its end: Insomuch that *Justice* it self has its praise from *Goodness and Mercy*. The severity of the Laws against Villains, and the Punishments inflicted on them, being not so much approved for the Pain that they suffer, as for the Instruction of the Example, and the security it brings to honest Men. In short, tho' Greatness will be always flattered, yet nothing is more evident, than that Goodness, and Goodness

ness only, will be approved and loved; whilst Unmercifulness and Cruelty, how common soever the practice of it may be, is yet counted *unnatural*, and is generally so hated a thing, that they who are most guilty of it, will call Impudence to their Aid, as long as it will serve the turn, to purge themselves to the World, by denying the Fact. But,

2. *Natural Piety* does no less bind us to do good to *all*, than common Humanity. For we are taught so to do, not only by what we know concerning our selves, but by all that we know of God.

As he has made us all in one Nature, so he hath made a common provision for us all, of things needful for our Life and Welfare. He has given us space and room enough to live in, and the Sun, and the Rain, and the Fruits of the Earth to serve us all, and all things convenient and comfortable in plenty, sufficient for the whole race of Mankind; a plain sign of his Goodness to us all, and a plain Instruction that he would have us live without Envy and Rapine, and be inoffensive and kind, and where need requires, liberal to one another.

And

And yet in the midst of this common Provision he hath still left us in need of one anothers Assistance ; and even the greatest of All for many comforts of Life, nay for the very necessary supports of it, to depend upon the meanest, as these do, for other benefits, depend upon those above them ; that so this mutual dependance we have upon one another might be a further obligation to mutual Affection, and that Benefits given and returned might always cherish and improve it.

Farther ; inasmuch as God hath derived us all from one stock, and made us of one Blood ; this seems to speak his intention of obliging all Men to mutual Beneficence. He could as easily have peopled the World at first, as he created one Man, and out of that Man took a Woman, to be the Parents of Mankind. But he rather chose that we should be the Children of one Stock, that remembring how vve vvere All once in the loins of one Parent, we should as Brethren love and help one another.

To conclude this Argument ; There is no Perswasion concerning God more deeply rooted in our Natures, than that he is Good and Gracious, full of Compassion, and ready to help
help

help the Miserable. For we are made to believe this so strongly, that no Opinions which imply the contrary, can utterly extinguish this Faith. For they that think the hardest things of God, do in effect confess their own mistakes, by praying always to him, and with more earnest applications, when they fall into distress. But is it not evident, that God by leaving such Impressions of his own Goodness upon our Minds, signified his Pleasure that we should be good to one another, under the penalty of being odious to him?

Such things as these may be said, to shew the common Obligations we are under to do good to All, as we are *Men*. But then,

II. There are peculiar Obligations to it as we are *Christians*. I will be bold to say, that if *Christianity* had destroyed the Principles of Humanity, it had been a terrible Temptation to a Good Man to reject it; Nay, if it had not established and improved them, we had wanted one considerable inducement to receive it. For there is so much natural evidence that Men are bound to do good to one another, that I doubt no evidence can be great enough that a
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Religion comes from God, vvhich lets Men loose from all the Obligations of Humanity. And if there be any one character of Doctrine, which would induce a Man to receive it as coming from God, more than another, it is this, That it doth effectually promote Benignity and Charity, a kind and generous Temper, and all sorts of Good Works. And this I am sure is the Character of true and uncorrupted Christianity. For,

1. As it is a Rule of Manners, it is wholly framed to destroy all dispositions to Rage, Malice, Cruelty, and Uncharitableness; and to plant Goodness, Compassion, and Benignity in our minds. To this end it hath provided against all the causes of Uncharitableness; that is, against Covetousness, Lust, Ambition, Impatience, Revengefulness, and the like. And therefore the Apostle doubted not to say, that *the end of the Commandment is Charity*. And that which is most remarkable in this kind is, That whereas nothing can with greater colour of Reason obstruct the disposition of a *Christian* to be good to All Men, than to be himself abused and wronged by others; therefore our Lord, to guard the Duty of Universal Beneficence,

nificence, has made it our Duty to forgive, nay and to love our very Enemies; which seems to be a Law peculiar to Christianity.

2. If we consider our Lord *Jesus* himself, the Author of our Religion; he was the most glorious pattern of Charity and doing good, that ever appeared in the World. For he was contented to come down into this wretched World, and to lead an afflicted Life, and to endure an ignominious and painful Death, for the Salvation of Mankind. And when he conversed publickly amongst his Country-men, he *went about doing good*: And though his Doctrine and his Works were still cavilled at, and perverted to a wrong Intention, by a froward and unthankful Generation of *Men*, yet he ceased not to do good to all that came to him for Relief; and to many others that never sought it from him. So that we are to treat every Man, as one whom *Christ* so loved, as to die for him. And if our Religion stands at all in the imitation of *Christ*, we are to do good to the *Unthankful* and *Unjust*, as need requires; nay, and to do *Good against Evil*, and if possible, to *overcome Evil with Good*. But,

3. The way which he chose for the propagation of his Religion, was above all things a demonstration, that he intended his Disciples should be inoffensive and beneficent to all Men. If indeed under a pretence of saving the Souls of Men, he had armed his Followers to kill his Enemies, his Doctrine had not carried so much as a face of Sincerity, but had rather looked like a design of Interest and Ambition, than of Charity and doing good. But with what Weapons did he send abroad his Ministers to subdue Men to himself? Go,

Mat. 10. says he, *cleanse the Lepers, heal the Sick, raise the*
7. 8. *Dead, &c. Freely ye have received, freely give.*

If this would not make their preaching effectual, the worst they were to do was, to *shake the*
Vers. 14. *Dust off their Feet against that place which rejected them.* If they were *persecuted in one City,* they were to *flee to another.* If Sufferings followed them from one place to another, they were to *possess their Souls in patience;* and, in all this, to *love and pray for their Enemies.* The Doctrine of our Lord J E S U S, and his own Example, and the Means he used to spread his Faith in the World, were all of a piece; that Charity being eminently preached in the way of converting

ing the World to his Religion, which was so powerfully recommended by his Example, and so strongly urged by his Doctrine. And if it had not been so, the Doctrine of *Christianity* had not done so much Good, as the way of propagating it had done Mischief. The Doctrine it self of *doing good to All*, had been but a dead letter, if it had been carried into the World with Rage and Cruelty; It had served only to condemn *Christians* of Hypocrisy, for pretending the Good of Mens Souls in destroying their Lives; and for pretending Charity, while they carried Confusion and Desolation where-ever they went. Had they behaved themselves in this manner, they had given just cause of suspicion that they were gathering a Party in an hostile opposition to all the World besides, and that the *Brotherly-kindness* of *Christians*, consisted in excluding the rest of Mankind from Common Charity, and required that Unbelievers should be treated as Enemies, and prosecuted with the utmost Hatred. And therefore altho in this very place St. Paul's design was to move the *Christians* to contribute towards the common Concerns of the Church; yet lest he should seem to ex-

empt them from the obligation of *doing good to All*, by calling for their Beneficence towards one another; he prevents the scandal by requiring Beneficence to *All*, almost out of its place. I say, tho his business was now to persuade them to *do good to the Household of Faith*: Yet that this might be no pretence for Inhumanity, he guards his meaning by an Exhortation in the first place, to do good to *all Men*. And upon all these accounts, I had much rather at the last Day, bear the Judgment of an *Heathen* that is endued with Humanity and Mercy, than of a *Christian* that has nothing of it, let him have what he will else. And thus much for the general Object of Charity, and the Duty of doing Good to All Men.

The second is more particular, viz. the *Household of Faith*; and upon this the Exhortation runs thus; let us do good, *especially to the Household of Faith*; that is, to *Christians*, who are one Body or Society of Men, united one to another under one Head, our Lord *Jesus Christ*, by one *Faith*, to the Profession of which, they are admitted by one *Baptism*, according to that Eph. 4. 5. saying of the Apostle, *one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism*;

Baptism; which are the Bonds that make the Church one Family or *Houſhold*. Now to all that are of this Houſhold, we are to do good *eſpecially*, and more than to others, though we are to do good to *all Men*. And under this particular there are theſe two things observable.

1. That the Obligation we are under to do good to *all Men*, does not hinder *preferring ſome before others*, whether in reſpect of the time, or the degree of doing good. I obſerved before, that we have ſo limited a Power, that we cannot be actually beneficent to All, and therefore muſt chooſe our Objects with diſcretion. There are ſeveral good Works, which many do not need from us, and we cannot perform them for All that do. And therefore Charity muſt be guided by Judgment in determining upon whom to let fall the effects of our readineſs to do good to All. Sometimes that Relation we have to one another, which is neareſt, is to determine the caſe. If I can provide only for my own Family, they are in the firſt place to be taken care for. And where the Caſe is in other Reſpects equal, I am to prefer an Acquaintance before a Stranger;

ger ; my Country-man before a Foreigner ; a Friend before an Enemy ; a serviceable Man before one that is good for nothing ; and a vertuous Man before a Villain. But the Case may be such, and the need so much more pressing on the one side than the other, that I may be obliged to prefer the later before the former. And as to this matter, when all is said that can be said, the prudence of every honest Man will be requisite to apply general Rules to particular Cases. Thus much is implied in this part of the Exhortation. But,

2. This is expressed, That whereas there are certain Reasons of making a difference, in doing good between Man and Man ; we should have a very special regard to those that profess the true Religion, and are Members of one Body with us as Christians, besides that common relation we have to them in the great Body of Mankind ; Especially if their Conversation be as it becomes the Gospel of *Christ*, which I question not is supposed by the Apostle, who would not have had a disorderly Liver so much as continued in the Household of Faith ; and more especially if their necessities be great and pressing ; and most of all
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when it happens that they fare ill for doing well, which is a Case that often happens. Tho such Men be none of our Kindred, tho they be none of our Country, they are yet allied to us by more sacred Ties, by a nearer Relation, by stricter Bonds; and that we are to do good to them more than to others, is a Point that stands upon plain and strong Reasons.

For, 1. It is very fit and just that we should *love them* more than others; For they are really better than other men are; and if upon this account they deserve a greater Interest in our *Affection*, they ought to have a proportionable share in the usual Expressions and Testimonies of it. When our Saviour said, *By this shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye have Love one to another*; we must needs think that he meant a more fervent and generous Affection than is at the bottom of the common Friendships of the World, and more effectual and lively Testimonies of it, than are usually seen amongst other Men; For otherwise, how should their *Love* distinguish them from those which were not his Disciples? But was this Extraordinary Affection and Beneficence no better than mere fondness and partiality? Was
it.

Joh. 13.
35.

it not to be groundd upon Wisdom and Judgment, and to be justified by the true Worth and Excellence of his Followers? The Disciples of *Christ* were to be Examples of Fidelity and Justice, Humility and Modesty, Patience and Meekness, and Faith in God, and likewise of Charity to Men. God himself loves Men for such Qualities as these are, and will reward them for ever. And therefore how is it possible but for the sake of these Qualities they should love one another, and shew it by the effects of true Esteem and Affection, in doing Good to Men. thus qualified, above others. And,

2. 'Tis a very necessary Expression of *Love* to our Lord *Jesus*, to make this difference in favour of his faithful Servants and Followers. He has made them Members of Himself, and as such he will treat them; and therefore he expects that we should do so too; as we undoubtedly shall, if we are true and living Members of his Body our selves. *If ye love me*, says he, *keep my Commandments*. And, *this is the Commandment that he hath given us, that we love one another*; as *St. John* tells us with much earnestness, and lays great weight upon it. But if it had

had not been urged in this manner, no inference from our love to *Jesus* could be more natural, than to bear a special kindness towards those whom he is pleased to own not only for his Servants, but his Brethren and his Friends. The truth is, he hath left them to receive the lively Expressions of our real Affection to him. And it is observable, that altho we shall be accountable to him for our behaviour to all Men, yet he hath told us beforehand that a particular regard will be had at our last Account, how we have comforted and relieved his Servants in their distress. For upon that Charge, that those on the left-hand had not given him *Meat* when he was *hungry*, nor *Drink* when he was *thirsty*; nor *clothed* him when he was *naked*, nor *visited* him when he was *sick* and in *Prison*; it is added, *Then shall they say, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and gave thee no meat? &c.* And then shall he answer them, saying, *Verily, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not unto me.*

3. Our Charity should run more plentifully in this Chanel, for the relief of good Christians;

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ftians;

stians ; because in their distress, *they rely only upon God for help*, and expect in it such ways only as God approves. But they cannot afford to help themselves by wicked or indirect means. We therefore should take our selves to be God's Ministers in bringing succour to them ; that whilst they have the honour to approve their dependence upon him, by refusing all ways of relief which are inconsistent with their Duty to him, we may have the honour to let them see that they have not trusted God in vain. We should consider true Believers and Good Men, when they are oppressed with Want, as under an effectual restraint from all base and impious ways of supplying themselves ; and consequently as the noblest Objects of Charity ; of Charity, I say, for the Charity of some Good Men is the usual way by which God relieves other Good Men in their Afflictions. It may sometimes be a good Reason to Relieve a Beggar, that we may prevent his taking a worse Course to Relieve himself. But Charity should never flow more plentifully than to those that will not be starved out of their Integrity, but trust God tho they dye. And that,

4. Because the end of Charity is doubly attained by having a special regard to such Persons, in doing Good to them, rather, and more than, to others : for here is not only Good done to Men that are in want and distress, which is common to the relief both of the Good and the Bad ; but here is *an encouragement given to Vertue too*, which is peculiar to the case of doing Good to Good Men. And therefore, besides what is done in mere Humanity, there should be something added as a reward to Vertue. And we ought to remember, that God in giving us more or less power to be beneficial to Men, has thereby put it into our power to encourage Piety and good Manners, and all that is worthy of Praise amongst Men. And whilst we make it manifest to the World, that Righteous Men are in their distress so far from being forsaken of God, that not only their Distress, but their Innocence too, and their Vertue shall be considered by Men ; we do effectually reprove Wickedness and Vice, and preach Honesty and Piety. And it is not unlikely but Charity thus placed, besides the good that it does to the

Bodies of some, will do good also to the Souls of others.

Upon such plain reasons as these, we should *more especially* do Good to the *Household of Faith*. Whereby also we may without farther trouble avoid their Censures, who carry their respect to those whom God loves and honours beyond what I have been pleading for: I mean those who reckon it to be no small Act of Piety, to visit the Bones, and the Ashes, and other Reliques of Saints and Martyrs, and to leave costly Presents at their Shrines and Sepulchres. For it has been laid to our charge with no little Confidence, that we dishonour and contemn the dead Servants of God, because we do not thus offer to 'em. But we may, I hope, clear our selves without offence, and say that we are as ready to honour the Dead, as to relieve the Living Saints. We are not well assured that the Bones and the Utensils, to which so mighty a regard is given, are indeed the Remains of Saints: But if we were, yet we are not satisfied that there is any respect to the dead Bodies of the Saints, beyond that of a decent and honourable Interment

terment, warranted by the Examples of the truly Primitive Church; and that any Service to 'em beyond this is acceptable to God, has wanted proof hitherto, and Defence as well as Proof. But now we are very sure that the Bodies of Righteous and Godly Men, are holy, and the living *Temples of God*, whilst they live with us in this World: For this the Scripture saith. We are sure that the Sacrifices of *Alms*, which are *Sacrifices*, when given for God's sake, that with them, I say, *God is well pleased*; for this is affirmed in the Scripture. We are very sure that they are doubly pleasing to him, when they are presented to his living Members, when they are distributed to the *Household of Faith*; for this also is according to Scripture. And in all these things there is such evident Congruity, that Reason without any dispute presently agrees to 'em. In a word, I do not read that any the least Promise is made to visiting and presenting the Ashes of the Dead; nor that *Christ* will take these things when done in honour of his Servants, as done to himself. But I read that at the last day, our having visited, and relieved, our feeding, clothing, and

and *comforting* the least of his true Servants that are with us, will be so accounted, and will be rewarded, as if these things had been done to himself. *In as much as ye did it to the least of these, ye did it also unto me.* All which being considered, we may be sure that we are well guarded against the angry Reflections of our Neighbours, if we take care to excel them in Charity to the *Living*, as much as they imagin they out-do us in honouring the *Dead*. And thus much for the Objects of Charity, as they are specified in the Text.

I am now to touch upon that intimation of the Rewards of it, which we have in the Text also : *As we have opportunity.* It is a true sense of these words to interpret them thus ; as often as occasions of Charity present themselves, and as long as we are in a condition to do good Works of this kind. But as I told you, they have a plain reference to the three foregoing Verses. *Be not deceived, God is not mocked : for whatsoever a Man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the Flesh, shall of the Flesh reap Corruption : but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit*

Spirit reap Life Everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us, &c. i. e. as long as the opportunity or season of sowing in good Works lasts, let us sow, that we may reap plentifully when Harvest-time comes, i. e. when the Rewards of Charity shall be given abroad, as they will assuredly be in a better World, if not in this also. The *Seed* which he means, as we find by the 6th Verse, are the good things of this Life. And as by *sowing to the Spirit*, he undoubtedly meant, doing good out of our worldly Store to All Men, and especially to the *Household of Faith*; so by *sowing to the Flesh*, must on the other hand be meant, the encreasing of our own Possessions, and the serving of our own Pleasures: I will not say providing for inordinate Lusts; for this is more than the Text necessarily implies, tho that be *sowing to the Flesh* too: So that we will set that aside, and consider what the use of that Wealth will come to, which is expended in things not to be blamed, in goodly Houses, and fine Cloaths, and a plentiful Table, and the like. For this is *sowing to the Flesh*;

Flesh; and the Apostle tells us, that he that *soweth to the Flesh, shall of the Flesh reap Corruption*; *i. e.* at the end of this Life he shall find, that all these things have *perished in the using*, and can turn to no account for him now at last, that there is no farther enjoyment of them; and that the very remembrance of them, which is all that is left, hath neither Pleasure nor Profit in it: And so he shall reap for this sowing, nothing but φθορά, Corruption, *i. e.* no increase, but a loss of what he sowed.

Now true it is, that thus we must all sow to the Flesh in some degree or other, we must provide for our own Bodies, and the needs of our Life; and we may make a reasonable use of our Wealth, for the innocent Pleasures of it too. But this is that sowing, which will yeild no Harvest at last. There is an enjoyment for the time, but when the use is over, there is no farther profit to be expected. So that he is said by the Apostle, to sow to the Flesh, who does little or nothing else with the good things of this World that God has given him, but only sets himself out with them, and
applies

applies them wholly to the serving of his own Needs and Pleasures. For by him that soweth to the Spirit, he could not mean one that makes no use of his Wealth for supplying his own Needs and Necessities, but one who does that, and relieves others too. Now of him it is said, that he shall reap Life everlasting; for tho the Seed be it self of a transitory, carnal, and perishing Nature, yet being thus disposed to a spiritual use, being cast into such a Soil, it shall yeild an everlasting Profit, and an Increase that he shall live upon for ever. But then says the Apostle, *Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for as a Man soweth, he shall also reap.* Though a Cup of cold Water given to a Disciple, in the name of a Disciple, shall not lose its Reward, i. e. when either more is not in the hand of him that gives, or no farther need in him that receives, yet so small a thing is mockery, where there is greater need on the one side, and ability to answer it on the other. This being remembered, it remains true what our Saviour said, *He that receiveth*; and therefore he that relieveth a Righteous Man, in the name of a Righteous Man, or because he is a Righteous Man, shall

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receive a *Righteous Man's Reward*. For to him in some part the *Righteous Man's Thankfulness* to God, and the support of his Faith and dependence upon God, and the making of his perseverance therein more easy, and the relieving him out of Temptation, may in good measure be imputed.

Now Brethren, we have in this Life only, the opportunity of sowing to the Spirit in this manner, and of making Friends to our selves of the *Mammon* of this World, that when it fails, we may be received into *everlasting Habitations*, and of turning the things of this World, which so often betray Men to *Perdition*, into the Instruments of our Salvation. Let us therefore often consider those Words and Exhortations of *St. Paul*, and that when our Reckoning comes to be cast up at the end of our Lives, there will be no longer any Profit or Comfort in what we have worn, and eaten, and drank; but we shall find that to be true, *The Belly for Meats, and Meats for the Belly; but God will destroy both it and them*. But that the remembrance of the Good we have done to *All Men*, and
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especially to the Household of Faith, will be sweet and pleasant to us, and that the Reward of it will endure for ever.

Therefore my beloved Brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your Labour is not in vain in the Lord.

F I N I S.

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